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Up to March 28, 1968

2,815 U.S. planes were downed in North Viet Nam

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SOUTH VIET NAM: **In 45 Days and Nights of Violent Attacks and Widespread Uprisings**
(January 31 — March 15, 1968)

PATRIOTIC ARMED FORCES AND PEOPLE CHANGED WHOLE ASPECT OF WAR, MOVED THE BATTLEFRONT TO URBAN AREAS, CREATED A NEW REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION AND DROVE THE ENEMY INTO A BLIND ALLEY

★ ONE-TENTH OF ENEMY EFFECTIVES (150,000, INCLUDING 45,000 AMERICAN AND SATELLITE TROOPS) KILLED, WOUNDED OR CAPTURED ★ 40 PER CENT OF TOTAL PUPPET TROOP STRENGTH PUT OUT OF ACTION OR DISBANDED ★ 40 PER CENT OF AIRCRAFT (2,200 PLANES AND HELICOPTERS) DOWNED OR DESTROYED ; ONE-THIRD OF ARMOURED VEHICLES (1,750 PIECES) DESTROYED ★ 50 PER CENT OF LOGISTICAL RESERVES DESTROYED OR PUT OUT OF USE ★ 700 HAMLETS AND VILLAGES WITH 1,600,000 PEOPLE LIBERATED.

(SOUTH VIET NAM P.L.A.F. COMMAND FOURTH SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE)

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P.L.A.F. fighters pursuing the enemy in the attack on Ba Chieu (Tay Ninh province) on Jan. 2, 1968).

MARCH 28, 1968: FIRST U.S. F.111-A "SUPERFIGHTER-BOMBER" DOWNED IN NORTH VIET NAM

THE Ha Tinh A.A.D. had the honour of grounding the first aircraft of this kind, the latest word in U.S. airplanes. U.S. news agencies describe the F.111-A or TFX as an aircraft said of "variable geometry," which means that it can at will swing its wings into different angles with the fuselage. This makes possible a speed three times higher than that of sound and landing and taking off on a runway less than 1 km long. This U.S.A.F. bomber, next in weight to the giant B.52, costing 7 million dollars, can carry 50,000 lbs. (22.68 tons) of bombs or rockets and is equipped with most up-to-date electronic devices, which enable it to fly daytime as well as night missions, in any visibility and to skim even rugged ground. Six planes of this type were sent around the middle of March to Thailand. Before even test-flights had been completed, they flew their maiden sorties over North Viet Nam on March 25, 1968 and three days later, one of them was bagged by our A.A.D.

LATEST NEWS: A second F.111-A plane was downed at 3.40 p.m. on March 30 in a U.S. raid on a populated region near Hanoi, in Ha Tay province.

Hanoi Press Opinion

New Naked Aggression of Israeli Reactionaries

THE attack mounted on March 21, 1968 by the Israeli troops against Jordan was the most serious violation of the ceasefire order of June 1967 since Israel had launched a war of aggression against the U.A.R., Syria and Jordan. The fact that Israeli Premier Levi Eshkol and Defence Minister Moshe Dayan personally led the operation proves that this large-scale plan had been deliberately mapped out by the Israeli reactionaries. The pretext for the attack on Jordan was to "retaliate on the Arabs' destructive attacks" on areas temporarily occupied by Israel. This gives the measure of blatancy of the aggressors. The American and British authorities seemed to be disapproving of that agents, the Israeli reactionaries did but they cannot shirk their responsibility in this affair since they had given material aid to Israel in this aggression and winked at the *fait accompli* of March 21, 1968.

Of late, the Israeli authorities have stepped up provocations against the Arab countries. On February 29, 1968 they insolently issued what was called an "order" to change the statu quo of the Arab territories under their control since June 1967, not regarding them as "enemy territories," in order to swallow them up. The March 21 attack was an attempt to force the Arab countries to accept the permanent occupation of their territories by Israel.

The Vietnamese people sternly condemn this naked aggression of the Israeli reactionaries against the Arab countries and wholeheartedly support the latter in their just struggle to wrest back the territories occupied by Israel and to defend their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Nhan Dan
(People's Daily)
March 23, 1968

Johnson's Predicament

IN addition to the difficulties resulting from repeated and powerful attacks of the South Viet Nam armed forces and people, to the anxiety felt in face of the movement of protest against the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam and to the headache caused by his utter isolation internationally, Johnson has also to fight in the race to the Presidency opponents not only in the Republican Party but also in his own Democratic Party. This is a predicament he has never experienced since his coming to the White House.

The heavy setbacks and deadlock of the U.S. in Viet Nam are the underlying causes which have triggered off the protracted debate among the American ruling circles. It throws light on the seriousness of Johnson's isolation and gives the peoples in America and the world a gloomy picture of the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam.

Quan Doi Nhan Dan
(People's Army)
March 25, 1968

RESPECT OF COMMITMENTS, VITAL INTERESTS...OR BLUFF ?

ON March 11, 1968 answering senator Mike Mansfield's question "Why are we in Viet Nam?" U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk harped on his favourite theme: "We are in Viet Nam to take steps to meet the common danger in the face of an attack by North Viet Nam against South Viet Nam." And to further explain the presence of the United States in Viet Nam he mentioned the four following points:

1. To eliminate "wars of national liberation" against the independence of the countries of South-East Asia;

2. To show that the United States respects its commitments as an assurance to allies and a warning to possible enemies;

3. To give the nations of South-East Asia the opportunity to develop and become stronger;

4. To face up to the possibility of a future problem with China.

One remembers that on April 7, 1965, at Baltimore U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson himself also tried to explain the "limited war" in South Viet Nam and the air war of destruction in North Viet Nam, invoking: the U.S. commitment to "help South Viet Nam defend its independence"; the necessity to "strengthen world order" which was allegedly based on the confidence of people in the U.S. promises to come to their rescue "if they are attacked", and the need to check "the appetite of aggression."

Thus, for over three years now, Washington has always regarded the rest of the world as naive people, giving a picture of everything completely different from what it actually is: the Vietnamese people, victim of aggression, have become a dangerous aggressor—which boils down to saying that the New Yorkers, for instance, attempt to commit aggression on the Floridan—whereas the American imperialists are glorified as knights ready to come to the rescue of the weak at any time.

The contempt with which the men in the White House and the Foggy Bottom treat the American and other peoples can be matched only by their vicious falsification of modern history. Didn't they sabotage brazenly the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam, the outcome of a conference that they could not torpedo? Didn't this original sin, which is theirs, in the making of the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam continue to operate when they strove to install the puppet regime of Ngo Dinh Diem that they had committed to defend against an entire people? In fact, repudiating the true, international commitment that they had taken in Geneva to respect Viet Nam's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, the U.S. imperialists proclaimed their faithfulness to a scrap of paper with at its bottom the signature of the master — the president of the United State — and that of his servant, who is none other than his own creature.

But the "commitment" theory could no longer stand on its feet as from the moment Ngo Dinh Diem was toppled by the popular masses' movement. New, equally short-lived quisling regimes succeeded one another. At a point Washington realized the danger of solely emphasizing its "commitments" towards its creatures in Saigon as the basis for the presence of the U.S. in South Viet Nam. In the thick of the Buddhist crisis, which in 1966 threatened to overthrow once again the so-called Saigon Government, Cabot Lodge unmistakably stated that even should a new Saigon regime demand U.S. troops to pull out, these would stay on in South Viet Nam. This means that from then on, confronted with an ever more precarious situation, it would be better for the Americans to advance something else at the top reason for their presence in this country. On October 30, 1967 at the Columbus University of Indiana State, Dean Rusk enumerated five points of which the first was "the peace and security of South-East Asia as being vital to the national interests of the United States." As a corollary of this new theory, the thesis on anti-communism was also revived in a form fit for new international requirements. To this effect Washington talked about struggling against a particularly dangerous aspect of communism which had allegedly emanated from Peking and used "wars of national liberation" as a means of propagation. Against this kind of communism, Washington swears to defend the world and, at the same time and in the first place, its own vital interests. A new presentation of American ideas has thus been elaborated, in which one can find a bit everything, including of course the theory on "commitments" — "commitments" to Saigon and some forty other countries as well.

That theoretical effort, however, did not yield much result. It cannot fool anybody apart from a handful of faddists. An increasing number of people of different political complexions have recognized that the Vietnamese people are struggling for their independence and freedom, a thing that they have been doing for a quarter of a century. They menace nobody, neither the United States nor any other country. It is the American imperialists who, lusting for world hegemony, have come to Viet Nam with their Expeditionary Corps, their Air Force and Seventh Fleet to cause mourning and sufferings in the two parts of this country. It is the American imperialists who have intervened militarily in Viet Nam as they did in Lebanon and the Congo, in Cuba and other countries where the masses, whether or not led by the communists, rose up to wrest back their national rights.

U.S. intervention in Viet Nam has been severely punished. The recent *Tet* events in South Viet Nam have furnished an ample proof. The fact that after such a bitter defeat Dean Rusk still persists in justifying American aggression, gives the measure of his obduracy.

It is ominous, nevertheless, that voices have been raised in the United States to oppose Dean Rusk's dangerous views. The American secretary of state speaks of U.S. vital interests in Viet Nam and South-East Asia, but the people and prominent American senators do not believe him. A new phenomenon that many call American neo-isolationism has appeared. A sign of the times! Dean Rusk talks about commitments that the U.S. has to honour to forty or so countries, but numerous Americans of consequence warn that attention should be paid to this fact, lest such commitments lead to military adventures of the Vietnamese type. So much so that American aid to foreign countries, a possible source of similar adventures, has been viewed with suspicion by members of the U.S. Congress out to ax as much as possible what Dean Rusk's department asked for.

The times have proved difficult for the Washington diehards. The more stubbornly they stick to their war of aggression in Viet Nam, the more setbacks they suffer at the hands of the Vietnamese people, and the stronger the opposition of justice-loving people in the U.S. and around the world. No plea whatsoever can conceal their true colours as aggressors and international gendarm.

TO THE READER

We are aware that there is much room for improvement in the wording of our paper. We apologize for this shortcoming and highly appreciate all your suggestions as they will help us to serve you more efficiently in future.

A TRIP TO HOA BINH BY A WESTERN VISITOR

WE were going to Hoa Binh in a commandcar, under a star-lit sky. The road was narrow and even at first. Then, as we approached the foot-hills which flanked the Red River delta it became sinuous and rough. It was an uneventful trip, under a war-time sky full of threats. But we Vietnamese and foreign friends did not think of the risks, and our chat went on merrily. We then arrived at a country hotel — a kind of well-managed cottage. After a warm reception by the manager we had a light meal and went to our rooms. We were brutally aroused from our sleep by the roaring, near, of a flight of marauding U.S. planes.

Very early in the next morning we visited an agricultural school which trained cadres for the province and which gave a perfect picture of the solidarity among the various minority peoples living in the region. The great part of the pupils belonged to the Muong, and the rest to the Kinh, the Thai, the Meo and the Zao. Girl-pupils accounted for 30 per cent of the total, and we were welcomed by these charming young ladies in their traditional dress who treated us to very melodious songs. The school was the second best in the province for its artistic activities. But the songs and frank laughter of these girls could not lead us into any mistake about the tough struggle waged since the American pirates destroyed this school which afterward was rebuilt, as it had been built, by the tireless hands of the pupils themselves. There were in the school some 400 pupils some of whom would soon be graduated. Five periods were devoted every day to technique and practical work, and three others to evening class. Besides, the pupils and their teachers had to build 5 kilometres of trenches which required the removal of some 7,000 cubic metres of earth. The school also had a mixed battalion of home-guards, and here where production and the fighting must be undertaken simultaneously, every one had his own responsibility. The managing body, which formerly was composed of 27 persons, was now reduced to the minimum, and the pupils therefore had to take part in the management of the school.

This school had as its task the formation of cadres for agriculture, animal husbandry, and economic management. The results recorded by it were so big that, on the recommendation of the State Committee of Youth and Sports, the Government had awarded it a Labour Order Third Class. But the greatest honour for these young people was a statue of hero Nguyen Van Troi which the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Labour Youth Union had decided to give to the school as an acknowledgement of its various achievements.

The obstinate fog lifted, and a bright sun came up. It was time for us to take leave of our young hosts and hostesses who were very representative of the young Vietnamese generation, both fearless and well instilled with a revolutionary zeal which enables them to overcome all difficulties, whether in increasing agricultural output or in fighting the best-equipped and most ferocious aggressor of this century.

We returned to our hotel in the evening, after an interesting day spent in an enchanting, almost supernatural setting with rocky peaks standing upright among the rice fields and under a blue sky which tended to make one forget the fact that a war is raging, here as well as in other parts of Viet Nam, which we soon saw with our own eyes.

At about 10.30 in the evening, when we were sleeping, again we heard the roar of jets, and then violent explosions which, although muffled, made us dash for the door. About three or four kilometres away, a vast, reddish fire lit up the horizon, and we stood there a long time to look at the blaze which kept rising in the night sky after the enemy planes had gone. It was not until the next morning that we were told that the American pirates had burnt to the ground the house of the manager of our hotel. One of the manager's children was killed. The man himself, his wife and the other children were seriously wounded. This small hamlet, famous in the whole region for its beauty, thus added another glaring piece of evidence to the endless record of crimes of the "savages of the twentieth century."

On the afternoon of the same day we were received by Quach Cong Cham of the Muong minority. A veteran of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, a member of the National Assembly for several legislatures, and now a leading official of the Cultural Committee of Hoa Binh province, he told us the long and hard way the Muong minority, the majority group in the province, had taken to reach human dignity. The Muongs have a time-honoured culture, as attested by the vestiges of the Hoa Binh civilization. But, until the liberation of their land in 1954, they had suffered under

(Continued page 6)

THE NORTH — BIG REAR BASE OF THE SOUTH

NEW-TYPE TRADE WORKERS

THE small State department store in the care of Le Van Phu, Le Duy and Tran Quang Mien catered for an area west of Vinh Linh located in the remotest corner of the Truong Son Range*. This is a thickly jungled area inhabited by the Van Kieu national minority, formerly called by the French "Moi" which means "Savage" in Vietnamese. The population was artificially kept in misery and ignorance.

Until the end of the first war of resistance (1946-1954), the Van Kieu worked their land with primitive farm implements dating thousands of years back. These are the "dot" or pointed sticks to make holes in the soil where to put seeds, or the "a riem," a rudimentary spade to dig up cassava roots and wild edible tubercles. It is understandable why the Van Kieu suffered from permanent shortage of food and lacked in practically everything, including the first necessities.

The state of things which he found when he came there to take up his post as chief of the State department store tormented Le Van Phu day and night, for he himself had been before the August 1945 Revolution in the depth of misery and ignorance. He set to himself the task of helping the inhabitants of the region develop production through the adoption of more advanced methods of cultivation and stock-breeding and through a more rational organization of work. There lay, he said to himself, the only way to raise the living standards of the people and consequently to increase the turnover of his shop. He talked to his comrades as well as to the local officials who warmly supported his ideas.

In fact, he and his comrades began with farm work, and ploughing. Proceeding step by step, they succeeded in teaching one, then many peasants to handle the plough and harrow. More arduous still was the fight against the superstitious practices which still prevailed in the region: it was only after peanuts and soya beans — until then unknown in the region — grew luxuriant in a so-called "haunted" field without anybody falling a victim to the "evil spirits" that the new farming methods were applied in earnest by the local population. Cultivated areas thereafter expanded rapidly along with an increasing productivity of the soil while labour was gradually made lighter.

Afterwards, Le Van Phu and his comrades popularized the new methods of stock-raising. They helped the inhabitants to organize the gathering of forest products in a more rational manner.

All this required of them much effort and painstaking labour, and above all, much ardour and dedication. One day Le Van Phu was to deliver to Mr Von, in R. hamlet, three piglets. He and his comrades had made it a rule to sell to the peasants at least one piglet for every pig they sell to the State so as to keep the herd of pigs in the region undiminished. It was a hard job considering the fact that the region is covered with high mountains and the only means of conveyance is a bamboo basket tied to one's back. And the trip would take a long day of walk along tracks. Le Van Phu was only at two-thirds of his journey when night fell. He had to stop and spend the night in a corner of forest. He gave the animals part of his food ration. The next day, he was overtaken by a downpour. Phu arrived at Mr Von's, shivering in all his limbs with fever. The story was soon known to all hamlets and it earned him and his comrades greater sympathy and confidence from the local population and contributed in no small measure to the development of production in the region.

The development of production and consequently of the purchasing power of the local population was only an outcome of the efforts displayed by Le Van Phu. Another task which devolved on Phu and his comrades was to acquaint the population whose quasi-primitive life greatly limited their needs with the use of more and more diversified consumer goods. And it was an enormous job for our "shop-keepers" to present these articles to the population and initiate them to their use, a job which they discharged gradually and patiently.

Then came the war, which right from the outset, raged in this region bordering on the 17th parallel. What to do to ensure the transportation of the merchandise from the district capital to the shop when American planes were bombing the roads day and night.

Le Van Phu and his comrades tunnelled the goods through jungle tracks. This meant endless days of painful fording of innumerable streams. However, this could not diminish Phu and his comrades' firm determination not to let the inhabitants of their region go without their daily necessities even for one day. And, as much to spare the people from strenuous and dangerous travels to the shop as to gradually lighten their loads, they decided to sell their goods in the course of their journeys through the hamlets. Also to avoid dangerous gatherings at the shop, they toted their wares to the remotest hamlets to sell them to the villagers. They took notes of the needs of each family in order to meet them in their next tour. It was with their boundless dedication to the people and through a constantly improved style of work that they succeeded in keeping their promise to the population that they would not, in any circumstance, let them run short of everyday's necessaries.

The Van Kieu people reciprocated the devotion of the employees of the new-type trade service with a profound attachment to the State interests. During a big flood that threatened to sweep away the shop, the population rushed to the help of Le Van Phu and his comrades in salvaging the State property. Each rescued a quantity of goods which they eventually returned to the State after the flood had subsided. Not a thing, even a needle, was missing!

For Le Van Phu, who was elected Hero of Socialist Labour by the recent Congress of Heroes and Elite Workers, there was another reward of no less importance. As a cadre native of the South and regrouped to the North in implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements, he felt great comfort and joy whenever he thought of his Van Kieu compatriots, on this side of the 17th parallel, who the State paralleled advanced methods of work and substantially raised their standard of living, to which achievement he has made a noticeable contribution.

** The mountain range running through the length of Central Viet Nam. Vinh Linh area straddling against this range, is located immediately north of the 17th parallel.*

News in Brief

D.R.V.N. Ambassador to Hungary Hoang Luong, envoy of the D.R.V.N. Government, recently visited Austria with a view to developing the relations between the two countries.

During his meeting with Austrian Foreign Minister Kurt Waldheim, the Vietnamese diplomat talked about the Vietnamese people's struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, and expounded the D.R.V.N. Government's position on the settlement of the Viet Nam problem.

He also called at the Central Committee of the Austrian Communist Party and met the "Committee of Austrian Doctors in Support of Viet Nam" which had taken many actions in support of the Vietnamese people.

AT the invitation of the C.C. of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and the Viet Nam World Peace Committee, a delegation of the Hungarian Patriotic Popular Front and Peace National Council led by Nandor Sebestyen, member of the Patriotic Popular Front and Secretary of the Peace National Council of Hungary, paid a friendship visit to the D.R.V.N.

AT the invitation of the Organizational Committee of the "French Intellectuals' Day in Support of Viet Nam" (March 22, 1968), a delegation of intellectuals of the D.R.V.N., headed by Hoang Minh Giam, and a delegation of intellectuals of the South Viet Nam N.F.L. led by Tran Hoai Nam, arrived in Paris to attend various activities of the day.

THE Eleventh Conference of the Viet Nam — China Border Railway Joint Commission ended recently in Hanoi with the signing of the protocol on the co-operation in this line between the two countries.

SOUTH VIET NAM PATRIOTIC ARMED FORCES AND PEOPLE CHANGED WHOLE ASPECT OF WAR

SOUTH VIET NAM P.L.A.F. COMMAND'S FOURTH SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE

On March 19, 1968 the Command of the South Viet Nam P.L.A.F. issued its 4th special communiqué on the military situation following the start, on January 31, 1968, of the general offensive and popular uprisings which are now spreading all over South Viet Nam. The communiqué gave a penetrating analysis of the meaning of the great victories scored in all fields by South Viet Nam's armed forces and people.

FAR-REACHING VICTORIES OF AN UNPRECEDENTED SCOPE *

THE communiqué released by *Giai Phong Press Agency* said:

"Up to March 15, 45 days have gone since the beginning of the great offensive and uprisings of our armed forces and people. In those 45 days, we fought and won continually, ceaselessly increased our forces and unremittingly improved our winning position, while the enemy were continually weakened and suffered repeated defeats, which further aggravated their loss of the initiative and their stalemate.

"**In the first half of this month, our armed forces and people again launched widespread attacks and rose up** in nearly 30 towns and provincial capitals across South Viet Nam.

"We also attacked the enemy and rose up in dozens of district capitals and enemy military sub-sectors.

"We raided nearly 20 **airfields** including Tan Son Nhat and Bien Hoa, the largest airbases of the enemy. Other important airbases, such as the ones in Cam Ranh, Da Nang, Nuoc Man, etc... also came under fire. These onslaughts, which came at a time when the U.S. and puppets were relying mainly on the firepower of their air force and on aircraft for means of convenience, further increased enemy confusion and difficulties.

"We struck at a series of storages among them many important ones, such as the ones at Cua Viet, Da Nang, Nha Be, Long Binh, Nha Trang, Ca Mau, Tra Vinh, etc..., causing heavy losses and difficulties to the enemy, both militarily and economically.

"We damaged and harassed many important **roads and waterways**, causing great obstacles to the enemy's supply, transportation, and military deployment. Highways 19, 1 and 4, the Long Tau river, and many other roads and rivers became graveyards for the enemy's vehicles and vessels.

"We assaulted various **defence lines and military positions** of the U.S.-puppets, and fought off their counter-attacks one after another. Many strongholds of the U.S. Marines in the Highway 9 defence line were shaken by our intensive and deadly big gun fire.

"In the **rural areas** in the plains, our people and armed forces rose up and attacked the enemy continually and won major victories. We wiped out many bases and installations of the puppet army and administration, expanded the liberated areas, widened our field of action and increased the potential of our resistance.

"Through 45 days and nights of fighting with matchless courage and resourcefulness, our armed forces and people have recorded unprecedented all-round successes.

"According to still incomplete statistics, from January 31 to March 15, our forces killed, wounded or captured over **150,000 enemy troops** including **45,000 U.S. and satellite troops**. Enemy units wiped out or heavily decimated included 3 regiments, and a multi-battalion paratroop unit of the puppets, over 60 battalions and over 200 companies. Besides, nearly **2,200 aircraft** were shot down or destroyed on the ground, **3,500 military vehicles** were blasted, over **300 big guns** wrecked, **233 ships and combat launches** sunk or damaged, **823 posts and watchtowers** razed to the ground, **150 bridges** blown up, and **300 storages** of various sizes burnt down. **1.6 million persons** in some 100 villages and over 600 hamlets liberated regained the right to be masters of their destiny. These figures show that in the past six weeks, our people and armed forces have been keeping up their attacks and their high combat effectiveness. In every one of the past six weeks, American papers quoting U.S. casualty figures given by the U.S. command (which naturally are far below actual figures) said that the U.S. losses were the heaviest in the war.

"As for the puppet army, its losses were so serious that the puppet administration has been frantically stepping up the draft in order to fill the gaps left by more than 100,000 puppet troops wiped out and more than 200,000 others disbanded.

"So, in one month and a half, we **wiped out over one-tenth of the total troop strength of the U.S., puppet and satellites**, and with the inclusion of those deserting or disbanded, the enemy's losses in manpower ran to over 40 per cent of their global build-up. In terms of units, about one-third of the number of puppet main force battalions lost half, or more than half, of their strength. Remarkably enough, 20 of the 35 puppet general reserve battalions — Paratroops, Marines and Rangers—were wiped out or heavily depleted.

"The enemy also lost very large quantities of war means: nearly 40 per cent of their aircraft, one-third of their armoured vehicles and more than fifty per cent of their logistical reserves were destroyed.

"These successes of the South Viet Nam P.L.A.F. and people are of a very great significance:

"*First*, in only a very short period of time, **we completely changed the situation of the war**, placing the enemy in tighter straits, and creating a new military situation very advantageous to us. We basically foiled the "two-prong strategy" of the U.S. imperialists, and made their military objectives set for this year absurd right from the outset.

"*Second*, these successes have more **than ever strengthened the confidence of the people** in both parts of Viet Nam in the final victory of their resistance to U.S. aggression. They are vigorously encouraging the people in the towns and other places still under enemy control to rise up and seize power, and on the other hand, are aggravating the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen's isolation and contradictions and blunting their aggressive will.

"*Third*, with the liberation of vast rural areas, our successes have further **broadened and consolidated our rear base** and created favourable conditions for boosting agricultural production and increasing the potential of the resistance. On the other hand, they have brought about the bankruptcy of the neo-colonialist economic policy of the U.S. in South Viet Nam, and worsened the economic and financial difficulties of the U.S. imperialists in their own country.

"*Fourth*, our successes also are of a **tremendous international significance** since they are eliciting from progressive people in the whole world, and also in the United States, stronger sympathy and support for our people's just struggle, and enhancing their confidence and pride in their own struggle against imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism, and its running dogs, for national independence, peace, democracy and social progress. The 'prestige' of U.S. imperialism has sunk to an all-time low.

"***These successes mark a very important turning point in that they have rapidly changed the balance of forces between us and the enemy. They have greatly promoted our strength in the military, political and economic fields, opened up a new situation in our resistance to U.S. aggression, and laid a firm basis for the current widespread offensive and uprisings to win complete victory.***"

LUCID LEADERSHIP — HEROIC PEOPLE AND ARMED FORCES

"THESE successes enhance our people and armed forces' pride in the **National Front for Liberation** — the inspirer of our people in South Viet Nam and the organizer of all their successful actions.

"The Front's decision to launch this great offensive and uprisings has proved entirely correct.

"We take pride in the great heroism of **our South Vietnamese people**. Defying the enemy's savagery and in spite of all their bluffs, our people, in the towns and the countryside alike, in the liberated zone and enemy-controlled areas, have displayed a dauntless revolutionary spirit, that makes them ready to make every sacrifice for independence and freedom, to wage a life-and-death struggle against the enemy, to fight side by side with the armed forces and to serve the front with high dedication, thus proving themselves fully worthy of the proud name of the 'Iron Fortress of the Fatherland.'

"We are very proud of the heroic **People's Liberation Armed Forces** who are wholly dedicated to the country and the people and who, upholding their glorious tradition of determination to fight and to win, have braved all sacrifices and hardships—to fulfil with distinction all the tasks assigned to them.

"We warmly hail the **Alliance of Forces for National Independence, Democracy and Peace in Saigon, the Front of Alliance for National Independence, Democracy and Peace in Hue**, and all other patriotic organizations now fighting side by side with the people and the P.L.A.F., resolved to carry through to the end the glorious task of resisting U.S. aggression and saving the country.

"We warmly hail those national-minded members of the puppet army and administration who have resolutely **broken away from the puppets and traitors**, and returned **to the people's fold** to join in the fight against the U.S. and Thieu-Ky clique.

"We are very proud of the heroic **people in the North** who have made every sacrifice for their kindred compatriots in the South and are their rear and soul devoted to the latter's cause.

"We sincerely thank the countries in **the socialist camp, the world's peoples and the progressive people in the United States** for their warm sympathy and support to our resistance war."

The communiqué then hailed the Liberation armed forces and people on all battlefronts in South Viet Nam for their great contributions to the successes in the recent past, and reviewed the achievements on each battlefront:

"In the provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, and Hue city, in the period under review, the revolutionary armed forces and people wiped out over 24,000 enemy troops, shot down or destroyed on the ground more than 300 aircraft and wrecked over 100 armoured cars. Nearly 500,000 people in rural areas have won back their right to be masters of their destiny.

"—In Central and Southern Trung Bo (Central Viet Nam), the revolutionary armed forces and people wiped out over 30,000 enemy troops, shot down or destroyed on the ground more than 600 aircraft and wrecked nearly 400 armoured cars.

"—On the Central Viet Nam Western High Plateaux the revolutionary armed forces and people wiped out 18,000 enemy troops, shot down or destroyed on the ground nearly 370 aircraft and wrecked 200 armoured cars.

"— In Saigon—Gia Dinh and in Eastern Nam Bo (South Viet Nam proper) the revolutionary armed forces and people wiped out 48,600 enemy troops, shot down or destroyed on the ground nearly 560 aircraft and wrecked nearly 900 armoured cars.

"— In Western and Central Nam Bo (South Viet Nam proper) the revolutionary armed forces and people wiped out 31,000 enemy troops, shot down or destroyed on the ground nearly 350 aircraft, and wrecked nearly 200 armoured cars and sunk or destroyed more than 100 war vessels and combat launches."

NEW SITUATION AND NEW POSSIBILITIES

THE communiqué said that the great efforts of the P.L.A.F. and people and their big victories has created an entirely new situation in all fields which is very favourable to the revolution and very unfavourable to the enemy.

The communiqué said:

"On the **military** plane, we have moved the battlefront to the towns and other heavily-populated vital areas, and extended the liberated rural areas to the fringes of the towns, enemy bases, and various key communication arteries. We now hold the full initiative of attack in all areas, and our position is one of continual, vigorous offensive and uprisings. The enemy's position is one of confusion. They have fallen back on a strategic defensive posture everywhere in South Viet Nam, forced to pull back to defend the towns and the main communication lines, or to regroup in their clusters of strongholds. In a word, they are encircled, chopped up, and spread thin on all battlefields.

"On the **political** plane, we have triggered a tide of uprisings to wrest back power in the mountains, in the plains, and in the towns. The working class, the peasantry, and other labouring masses, the students, and other strata of the population are rising up and continually extending their control with growing revolutionary vigour. The Front against the U.S. aggressors and the Vietnamese traitors is as broad as never before. The puppet administration is losing its hold and, under repeated attacks, is heading toward complete collapse. The U.S. imperialists are finding themselves in a deteriorating isolation.

"On the **economic** plane, our strategic rear base is steadily broadening owing to the favourable developments in the military and political situation, which make it possible to boost agricultural production, and this, in turn, will mean a steady flow of supplies for the front. On the other hand, the enemy's rear base is fast shrinking, is being **split up** and more and more tightly encircled. As a result, the enemy's on-the-spot strategic reserves become more and more scanty, which will entail big difficulties for their finance and economy."

The communiqué added:

"The widespread offensive and uprisings in the recent past marked the beginning of a new stage in our resistance. This is the most glorious stage which is of a decisive character as regards the destiny of our nation, a stage of tumultuous struggle and glorious victories characterized by the following main features:

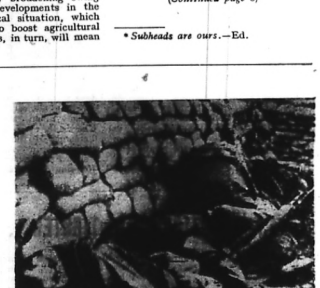
"*First*, **our offensive and uprisings are gaining in strength and steadiness** while the enemy's defensive position is worsening continually. Our offensive and uprisings which have taken place with growing vigour everywhere — in the mountain areas, in the plains and in the towns — are winning bigger and bigger victories and dealing heavier and heavier blows at the enemy.

"*Second*, we are **expanding more and more the liberated zone** and advancing vigorously toward the complete liberation of our country. **Revolutionary power**, set up everywhere and at all levels, is steadily strengthening and will eventually replace the puppet administration completely. Meanwhile, the enemy-controlled zone is shrinking, and the puppet administration is breaking down and heading for complete collapse.

(*Continued page 6*)

* *Subheads are ours.*—Ed.

KHE SANH, a Hell for Yankee Aggressors



GI's in Khe Sanh trying to escape P.L.A.F. artillery fire.

AMERICAN papers have told a story which is not wanting in piquancy: the commander-in-chief of an army said to be "the most powerful and the most modern of the [capitalist] world" asked his chiefs of staff to sign a statement guaranteeing that the latter would defend with success a beleaguered fortress. Our readers can easily guess that the C-in-C was L.B. Johnson and this fortress, Khe Sanh.

A LOST CORNER OF THE BORDERLAND

KHE SANH is a little valley lost in a rugged terrain close to the Viet Nam—Lao border. Clad with a thick mantle of tropical jungle, it is crossed by Highway No 9 whose general course follows the temporary military demarcation line between the two zones of Viet Nam. Leaving National Route No 1 at Dong Ha, Highway No 9 clambers up the first spurs of the Truong Son Range, then threads its way into narrow gorges and drops into Khe Sanh valley, traversing the most accessible pass between Viet Nam and Central Laos; its passage on Vietnamese territory is 50 kilometres long. The point of junction between Highway No 9 and National Route No 1—Dong Ha—is linked on the one hand by National Route No 1 to Quang Tri (12 km to the Southeast) and Hue (60 km farther) and on the other by a 12 km navigable river to Cua Viet and the sea.

Highway No 9 Front — Khe Sanh sector *(in box)*

Caption:

a) Wiping out of the heliborne puppet Company No 256 (January 21, 1968).

b) P.L.A.F. encircling U.S. Marines.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

LIKE French General Navarre at Dien Bien Phu formerly, Westmoreland thought of setting a "trap" at Khe Sanh to attract the P.L.A.F. and therein "to smash the Viet" with his air and artillery power. With the same self-conceit as his predecessor, he also challenged his adversaries to come up against it.

The challenge was accepted and the P.L.A.F. pressure was soon felt as the poor U.S. Marines stranded in the deep jungle in their fortifications were copiously pounded by hostile cannons and mortars.

On Jan. 20, 1968, two U.S. Marine companies intercepted during a patrol and 1 brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Detecting devices, cannons capable of firing atomic shells, radar of all types, most diversified and sophisticated gadgets, etc. complete this "defence" line known as McNamara's electronic barrier.

The sector known as Khe Sanh is itself constituted by a series of strongholds, including the H.Q. of the Huong Hoa military sub-sector located in Khe Sanh township, the Lang Vay Special Forces camp, 8km west of this township, and the Ta Con base, the most important, north of Highway No 9.

just in the neighbourhood of their positions on Hill 845, northwest of Ta Con, left 140 of their men on the terrain. Next day, the P.L.A.F. attacked in force the H.Q. of the Huong Hoa sub-sector which was defended by a reinforced company of puppet regional troops, 2 platoons of puppet "civil guards," a U.S. intelligence platoon and numerous U.S. advisers. After 5 hours of fighting, they seized control of this position. Company 256 of the puppet regional forces hellifited into the area and landed 2km from there at Cu Bac was quickly wiped out. U.S.-puppet losses on that day were put at more than 300 killed or wounded. Khe Sanh township was liberated along with some 1,000 inhabitants grouped into camps by the enemy.

Two weeks later, on Feb. 7, 1968, it was the turn of the camp of the Green Berets at Lang Vay which fell following a midnight-to-dawn devastating attack. Throughout most of the day, inspite of intensive enemy air bombardment, the P.L.A.F. repulsed all counter-attacks supported by tanks. Five Special Forces companies were wiped out, some 1,000 of their men killed or wounded, 135 others taken prisoner and all their armaments seized.

The Khe Sanh stronghold now has Ta Con as the only base left, guarded by 6,000 U.S. Marines and 1,500 puppet Rangers. Around this base the P.L.A.F. are daily tightening the ring of siege.

The U.S. command has done everything it can to relieve the siege. For instance, according to an *AFP* dispatch from Saigon on March 13, 100 raids were conducted on that day against Khe Sanh, let alone that Thailand-based B.52's came in 5 times in 24 hours for carpet bombing. *UPI* reported on March 20 that virtually all the U.S. aerial forces had been engaged against the P.L.A.F. and their supply routes around Khe Sanh.

"LUNATIC ASYLUM IS PREFERABLE"

ALL that unfortunately is but lost labour. The enemy garrison now depends on an airlift for its survival. Nevertheless, the runway is pounded daily by the P.L.A.F. artillery and rendered constantly unusable by shell holes and carcasses of transport planes and helicopters destroyed on the ground or shot down, to such an extent that,

(*Continued page 6*)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE FOR SOLIDARITY WITH VIET NAM

THE WHOLE WORLD SIDES WITH US

THE International Student Conference for Solidarity with Viet Nam, convened by the International Students' Union, met in Prague (Czechoslovakia) on March 18 and 19, 1968.

The delegates warmly hailed the great victories achieved by the people and armed forces of South Viet Nam since early spring 1968.

The Conference severely condemned the crimes perpetrated by the American imperialists against the urban populations of South Viet Nam and the barbarous air raids on the North.

The Conference called on all students and student organizations in the world to urgently step up their movement for political, moral and material support to the people and students of Viet Nam.

The conference fully backed the "Ten Days of Protest" to be staged by American students from April 20 onward, their strike scheduled for April 25, and their demonstrations planned for April 27, to oppose the aggressive war in Viet Nam.

NORWAY

THE 12th Congress of the Norwegian Communist Party, held in Oslo, passed a resolution on Viet Nam demanding that the American imperialists put an end to their war of aggression in Viet Nam, stop the bombing of North Viet Nam, and withdraw American troops from South Viet Nam. It also demanded that diplomatic relations with the Saigon regime be broken off, relations established with the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam be granted recognition.

WEST BERLIN

ON March 23, 1968, 4,000 West Berliners including young people, students, intellectuals, Protestants, held a meeting in protest against the American imperialists' aggression in Viet Nam.

At the meeting, the delegates stressed that "solidarity with the heroic people of Viet Nam struggling to safeguard their freedom should be strengthened" and that "whoever keeps silent is an accomplice of [American] crimes."

They demanded that the American aggressors end their bombing of the D.R.V.N. and denounced the US government's support for the American imperialist aggressors and supplying them with poison gas and napalm.

IRAQ

ON March 19, President A.R. Mohamed Arif of the Iraqi Republic received Nguyen Xuan, envoy of the D.R.V.N. Government on an official visit to Iraq. The Iraqi President said: "We highly value and admire the struggle and efforts of the Vietnamese people aimed at liquidating imperialism and the aggressor. The Vietnamese people will certainly not bow to force. Because of their sacrifices and courageous struggle, they deserve the finest life in the world. The people of Iraq support the fight for independence and freedom waged by the people of both zones of Viet Nam."

WEST AFRICA

THE Conference of Heads of State of four West African countries — Mali, Guinea, Mauritania and Senegal, — held in Labé, central Guinea, on March 24 and 25, 1968, expressed admiration for the Vietnamese people's heroic struggle, and unconditional support for the Vietnamese people's aspirations for freedom, independence, national reunification and peace.

KHE SANH...

(Continued from page 5)

according to *Reuter* on March 11, more than 90 per cent of the supplies going into the Khe Sanh outpost were dropped from the air.

What particularly frightens the Marines holed up in their bunkers is that, despite U.S. air bombardment, every morning when the fog has lifted, they observe — likethe French at Dien Bien Phu formerly — that the zigzagged trenches of the P.L.A.F get closer to their positions than the previous night, reaching and even creeping under their barbed wire entanglements. The adversaries are now so close that U.S. air and artillery intervention becomes a real danger to its own troops. At night, the sound of picks and shovels disturbs the latter's sleep ; in the same way, blasting holes can be made slowly but tenacioubly under their feet, and the time may come when they erupt like a volcano. Any attempt to move out is doomed to disaster, in view of the keenness of the P.L.A.F. whose snipers cut down, as in the shooting-stand, any imprudent enemy who ventures out of his casemate. Teams of aircraft hunters, poised on vantage-points, make landings and take-offs extremely dangerous to the Americans, and the air-dropping being as risky as it is inaccurate, a good part of the containers falls into the positions of the attacking forces and a high proportion of U.S. planes are hit by hostile fire (25 per cent according to *Reuter*).

Meanwhile other elements of the P.L.A.F. keep up their harassing activities on Highway No 9 which has been laced with deep and large ditches by the local population over kilometres, blocking all traffic. Warehouses and port installations blaze at Dong Ha and Cua Viet, regular targets for P.L.A.F. artillery men.

In Khe Sanh, completely isolated and cut off from all supplies, the U.S. Marines live underground like moles, as described by Western war correspondents, and are short of everything—arms, munitions, food and even drinking water. The strain on their nerves is such that an American officer has confided to a *Reuter* correspondent that a lunatic asylum is preferable. As for the puppet Rangers, their chief on March 17 said to an *AP* correspondent, "If my men hold on to Khe Sanh much longer, they will lose morale and give way to despair." Cases of self-inflicted wounds have become frequent, but even the evacuation by helicopter of the wounded and the sick has been rendered more and more difficult by the accurate fire of the P.L.A.F.

In Saigon as in Washington, the haughtiness and self-conceit of the first days have vanished. Bickering develops over the advisability of the measures already taken, the strategic value of Khe Sanh, etc... The idea of the abandonment of the area has been even mentioned in spite of the famous "signed statement" required by L.B. Johnson. Unfortunately for them, to hang on to Khe Sanh is a fatal danger, but to pull out is another, no less grave. They fear a Dien Bien Phu at Khe Sanh. Yet, they forget that their losses in this sector and in the northern area of Quang Tri in the past 2 months are nothing less than those of the French colonialists in the celebrated valley in North Viet Nam. The number of killed, wounded and captured, mostly Americans, is close on the three-quarters of the losses of de Castries, while the 200 planes and helicopters or so shot down or destroyed represent more than 4 times the number of French planes lost at Dien Bien Phu, to say nothing of the technical sophistication and money cost of these engines and their equipment which far surpass that of the French aircraft in Dien Bien Phu time.

Thus at Khe Sanh, for the first time in the U.S. military history, elite mobile forces of the U.S. army have been encircled for months and driven into a costly and desperate defensive. For the first time, too, the most modern technical means of the world's most powerful power have proved ineffective in face of a seasoned enemy, having superior morale, endowed with intelligence and being, moreover, well commanded. The fear of total destruction is hunting the mind of the U.S. command. The U.S. aggressors have sustained considerable losses in the sector of Khe Sanh and in northern Quang Tri. Their desperate plight on this front at present is merely a microcosm of the passivity and failure they find themselves in in all theatres of operations in South Viet Nam.

A TRIP TO HOA BINH...

(Continued from page 3)

the double yoke of feudalism and French colonialism. These two oppressive systems over the Muongs supported each other. As it was, slavery at that time still existed among the Muongs, and the local nobility, or the "Lang.Dao," held sway over the people. The peasants were forced to 200 corvées a year for the "Lang, Dao" and the result was that a great part of the population only had enough rice to go round for two out of every twelve months. The rest of the time, they fed themselves on potatoes and various wild plants they found in the jungles.

The society was divided into clans, and only the nobility was entitled to schooling. Besides these physical privations the people were subjected to moral humiliation. They were called labelled "Moi," Vietnamese equivalent to "savage" They were not allowed to wear shoes and decent clothes. They did not had to dress in coarse cloth and were not allowed to use silk. Marriage between the "Lang. Dao" and the peasants was prohibited. There was the case of a landlord, Duyen by name, who, although having 8 wives already, took by force for concubine the beautiful wife of a peasant. In addition to these humiliations and privations there were the devastation and the regime of forced labour imposed by the French colonialists.

Now, seeing these big houses on stilts of the Muongs, this merry and dynamic people dressed in their traditional clothes, these young people at the Agricultural School of Hoa Binh province where the Kinhs, the Muongs, the Thais, etc. are living together with nothing to tell of their difference save their traditional clothes, one fell proud to belong to mankind and to take a small part in this struggle against the American aggressors.

This smiling and courteous people have already heralded the advent of to-morrow's mankind, and Johnson cannot alter this course of nature.

A.D.

P.L.A.F CONTINUE TO TIGHTEN...

(Continued from page 8)

Fierce battles took place on March 25 about 50 km northwest of Saigon during which the P.L.A.F. occupied Trang Bang and Go Dau on Highway No 1 and intercepted three U.S. rescue convoys coming from three different directions, destroying more than 40 vehicles including many tanks and armoured cars.

Northeast of Saigon, the P.L.A.F. wiped out a company of U.S. Para Division 101 some 15 km north of Bien Hoa airbase (which was pounded on the night of March 21) at the same time as the base of Australian forces about 60 km northeast of Saigon. On March 14, about 100 G.I.'s of Brigade 199 were put out of action, 30 armoured vehicles destroyed some 30 km northeast of Bien Hoa.

IN the **Mekong Delta**, from March 14 to 17, the P.L.A.F. mounted many counter-attacks against the U.S. and puppet troops operating in the vicinity of My Tho town, causing 283 casualties among the enemy, including 133 Yankees. Further south, a bridge within one kilometre from Ben Tre town was blown up on March 22.

In the region of Can Tho, the biggest town in the Mekong Delta where is located the H.Q. of puppet 4th Army Corps at a dozen kilometres, on March 13 and 14, 5 puppet battalions operating in the southwest of the town suffered 260 casualties. Tra Noc airfield, 7 km northwest of Can Tho town, came under heavy artillery fire on Maech 21 and 25 while on March 22, a sappers' unit suffered losses 3 km of the city.

In Tra Vinh province two townlets were liberated on March 15 and 18.

South Viet Nam Patriotic Armed Forces and People...

(Continued from page 5)

"*Third*, **our armed forces have become stronger and stronger, and are developing at a growing tempo.** On the other hand, the enemy's forces have been depleted beyond replenishment and cannot avert total defeat.

"*Fourth*, our people are enjoying ever warmer and more vigorous **sympathy and support from the progressive people of the world, including the progressive people in the U.S.A.**, while the U.S. aggressors and the Vietnamese traitor's isolation is becoming more and more critical and their internal dissensions are growing."

The communiqué said that the struggle ahead is still arduous before it obtains final victory because the enemy will still make desperate efforts. Therefore, it pointed out, the entire South Vietnamese people and the P.L.A.F. should give full play to their revolutionary heroism and the nation's tradition of dauntless struggle.

IN conclusion, the communiqué called on all officers and men of the P.L.A.F. to keep on attacking the enemy continually and with force on all battlefronts, wipe out more strongholds of the enemy, beat off all their counter-attacks, chop up all their communication lines, wipe out as much manpower of the enemy as possible, destroy more of their war means, and race against time to win still greater victories in order to secure final victory.

THE THAI AUTHORITIES SHOULD GIVE UP THEIR DANGEROUS POLICY

OF late the Thanom Kittikachorn—Praphas Charusathien ruling clique in Thailand showed unusual zeal in serving the the U.S. policy of aggression in Viet Nam. When American planes began bombing North Viet Nam early 1965, most of the raids were made by U.S. planes based in Thailand (according to William Bundy, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, the proportion has now reached 80 per cent). Since September 1966, B.52 strategic bombers stationed at Utapao airbase in Thailand have been carrying out daily raids in South Viet Nam and the demilitarized zone. U.S. planes of the latest model — the F.111A—have also been brought to Takli (Thailand) from where bombing missions against North Viet Nam have been flown.

The total of U.S. troops in Thailand has reached 43,000, stationed at more than 60 military bases, 13 airbases and 3 missile bases, all under U.S. control.

In September 1967, at the orders of their U.S. boss, the Thai ruling circles sent the first 2,500 Thai mercenaries to South Viet Nam. That took place just after the U.S. had suffered a crushing defeat in its second dry-season counter-offensive (1966-1967) which was followed by stunning blows it received during the subsequent rainy season of 1967. In its tight straits, to solve its manpower shortage Washington had pressed its satellites to contribute more cannon-fodder to the U.S. military venture in Viet Nam. The Thai ruling clique has proved most eager to respond to the U.S. request. Preparations were made to send to South Viet Nam additional Thai mercenaries to make up one division as promised to the Yankees.

Events that took place in South Viet Nam since the last Lunar New Year Festival graphically demonstrated that though having fielded 1,200,000 troops the U.S. army is unable to stand the sweeping offensive of the revolutionary forces in South Viet Nam. On the one hand, Westmoreland was asking the White House for 206,000 more men, and on the other, U.S. satellites were again forced to contribute more mercenaries. Again the Thanom Kittikachorn—Praphas Charusathien are showing their zeal towards the U.S.

Praphas Charusathien declared on March 23 after his visit to a number of other U.S. satellites including Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, and South Korea, that he would have completed the sending of a division of Thai mercenaries to South Viet Nam by June this year. What is more, in this trip he also called for the setting up of a military alliance in Asia and the Pacific under the aegis of U.S. imperialism which would pull the strings from behind the scene. Meanwhile, on Thai soil, the Bangkok authorities allowed the S.E.A.T.O. military bloc to hold an exercise codenamed "Talisman" in Korat province under the command of U.S. General Richard G. Stilwell.

Though the whole world has been insisting on the unconditional and permanent ending of the bombing of the D.R.V.N., the Thai authorities have on several occasions come out against such a just demand. More barefaced still, speaking in Taiwan on March 9, 1967, Praphas Charusathien urged his ally (the U.S.) to stage a ground invasion of the D.R.V.N.

To serve U.S. aggression in Viet Nam, the Thai ruling circles have surrendered their national sovereignty to the U.S. and applied many policies which run counter to the Thai people's interests. They forced the people to pull down their houses and abandon their land to give room for U.S. military bases and airfields. They even drove off or arrested those who were found in the vicinity of these bases. They winked at crimes perpetrated by U.S. troops against the Thai population. The Thai public recently was deeply shocked by the brutal murder of a Thai woman named Amphai Wongsri by American soldiers at the Takli airbase. However, the Bangkok authorities remain silent and are doing their best to hush up the matter.

Faced with stronger and stronger protest from the Thai people, they resort to outright suppression of the people in many regions have been forced out of their villages into concentration camps labelled "independent villages." The Bangkok authorities also slanderously described the resisting of the Thai people against their subordination to U.S. policy as "communist insurgency," sent troops helped by G.I.'s on bloody operations and aircraft on savage bombing raids on many villages.

With regard to the Vietnamese residents who have always respected Thai laws and arrested and lived in complete harmony with the people in northeast Thailand, also to demonstrate their loyalty to American policy the Bangkok rulers have carried out a series of acts of repression, arrests and murders. They are plotting to forcibly repatriate those Vietnamese nationals to the areas of South Viet Nam under the U.S.-puppet control so as to impress them into the puppet army. It is obvious that the Bangkok authorities have seriously wrecked the August 14, 1959 agreement on the repatriation of Vietnamese nationals in Thailand as well as the protocol on the temporary suspension of this repatriation signed on Sept. 8, 1965 by the Red Cross Societies of Thailand and the D.R.V.N. under which "the Bangkok authorities have undertaken to respect the rights of the Vietnamese

The Wellington Meetings of Pirates

ACCORDING to Western sources, a round of talks will be held early this April in Wellington, New Zealand, between the U.S. and its allies and satellites. As scheduled, the SEATO meeting will take place on April 3, to be followed by a conference between the United States and the five other participants in the Viet Nam war: Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea (April 4), and the ANZUS meeting between the U.S., Australia and New Zealand (April 5). The U.S. delegation to those conferences will be led by Dean Rusk, the right arm Johnson in the shaping and execution of the U.S. policy of aggression in Viet Nam.

New Zealand Prime Minister Keith Holyoake said that the aim of these meetings was to exchange views on the situation and examine the line of future action. There can hardly be more general terms. Public opinion points out however that this round of talks is closely connected with the step-up of the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam, in the wake of the heavy defeats of the U.S. in the past two months. It is rightly assumed that the U.S. will take this opportunity to reassure its satellites who are in utter confusion and bewilderment and at the same time it will discuss with them measures to intensify the war of aggression in Viet Nam, first and foremost to press them for more mercenaries to its war in South Viet Nam. This has become all the more urgent since, according to informed circles, the Johnson administration could, in the present conditions, at best scrape up a few dozen thousands more of U.S. troops for the Viet Nam war.

However, there is as yet no indication that the Johnson administration could fully materialize its plan. It is common knowledge that while the U.S. is sinking deeper and deeper into the bog in Viet Nam, its satellites in Asia and the Pacific are feeling more and more uneasy, being tied to the U.S. war chariot. It is true that sending young men in their countries as cannon - fodder for the U.S. imperialists in South Viet Nam, the reactionary ruling circles in the U.S. satellites have received sizeable quantities of U.S. dollars as reward. But they have at the same time incurred upon themselves higher and higher indignation of the people in their countries, especially knowing that the U.S. is losing steadily, and more and more bodies of dead mercenaries are being brought home. The political and armed struggle of the Thai and South Korean peoples against the neo-colonialist regimes imposed by the Yankees and against the puppet stooges of the U.S., for independence, democracy and peace, is forging ahead. The movement of protest against the U.S. criminal aggression in Viet Nam and the sending of mercenaries to the American war in South Viet Nam has spread from broad masses of the people to even a number of people in the ruling circles of Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines.

This cannot but cause big headaches for the U.S. satellites, which prevent them from executing the "orders" placed by their boss for more cannon-fodder. Consequently, the differences between the U.S. and its satellites which had arisen in the previous bargainings about the sending of mercenaries to the Viet Nam war, have grown. Significantly enough, in July last year, the Taylor-Clifford mission to a number of U.S. satellites in Asia and the Pacific area met with a lukewarm reception from the ruling circles of these countries and came back empty-handed to Washington. The situation in South Viet Nam since the Lunar New Year offensive of the Liberation forces cannot but aggravate the difficulties of the U.S. in recruiting more mercenaries from its satellites. This was admitted by *UPI* which on March 17 reported that on March 12 and 13 respectively, the South Korean Foreign Minister and Defence Secretary declared that at the present time their government could not contemplate committing more South Korean troops to South Viet Nam. More recently, the Philippines government pretexted "financial difficulties" to withdraw gradually the Filipino troops from South Viet Nam camouflaged as the "Philippines Civic Action Group" (PHILCAG), and replace them with a medical team of smaller strength. For his part, the Australian Prime Minister said that the 8,300 troops Australia had contributed to the U.S. is the "maximum figures." The New Zealand ruling circles who have sent only a token force to South Viet Nam are now all the cooler to the U.S. request.

Nevertheless, observers believe that through pressure and the promise of more "aid" the U.S. still is able to persuade its satellites to bring some more troops to South Viet Nam. The Thai authorities, for instance, have promised to complete the sending to South Viet Nam of a division in exchange for Hawk missiles and more money from the U.S. But it is clear that even if the U.S. can scrape up a few more troops from its satellites, this decidedly cannot save it from its obvious failure in South Viet Nam. The U.S. has so far fielded more than half a million G.I.'s equipped with the most up-to-date weapons and war means. With the satellite and puppet troops, they now have 1.2 million troops at their disposal in South Viet Nam. Yet, the U.S. and its henchmen continue their downward slide, going from one failure to another, each heavier than the last. Since the avalanche-like early Spring attacks of the South Viet Nam patriotic forces, the U.S. has sunk deeper and deeper in its strategic defensive. Troops of the U.S. and its henchmen are being thinly spread and ground down on all battlefronts. There is practically no more "safe rear" or "sanctuary" for the U.S. and its henchmen on the South Vietnamese land.

The mercenary troops have also been given sound thrashings by the Liberation armed forces. They came to South Viet Nam under such fearful names as the "Ferocious Tiger" and "Blue Dragon" Divisions of the South Korean, the "Queen's Cobra" Division of the Thai. However, faced with the sweeping attacks of the South Viet Nam Liberation armed forces and people, all these tigers, dragons and cobras, just as their "senior companions"—the American troops—have lost all their fangs and claws and run as fast as their legs could carry the moment they see action.

The U.S. imperialists are in a fix. The Wellington meetings assuredly will be no help for them. The much-advertised confabulation between Johnson and the ring-leaders of the U.S. satellites in Manila in 1966 has failed to bring the least success to the U.S. war of aggression in Viet Nam. How can the forthcoming conferences which are convened at the present moment when the U.S. is sustaining disastrous defeats be of any use to the aggressors?

Westmoreland's Dismissal...

(Continued from page 8)

its policy of aggression represented by Johnson, rather than in the inefficiency of any field commander.

Four months after McNamara, Lyndon B. Johnson sacked Westmoreland and pensioned off other high-ranking officers who had shared in the conduct of the Viet Nam war, like Harold Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, and Grant Sharp, commander of the U.S. Forces in the Pacific. This constitutes another milestone in the particularly serious crisis of the U.S. Viet Nam policy of aggression. Now Johnson is at a loss to find someone to replace Westmoreland. However famous the general he would dig up to dispatch to Viet Nam as commander of the Expeditionary Corps, the latter will only tie his name to a chariot heading towards the abyss of defeat.

SOUTH VIET NAM

THE CRIMES OF THE U.S.—THIEU—KY CLIQUE MUST BE DULY PUNISHED!

AT 10 p.m. on January 31, 1968, *Giai Phong Press Agency* reported, by order of the American aggressors, several detainees among them Madame Le Thi Rieng, member of the South Viet Nam N.F.L. Central Committee and Vice - President of the South Viet Nam Liberation Women's Union, were carried away in a car by men of the Thieu-Ky clique. As the car was passing along Hong Bang Street, a little frequented street in Saigon, it came under heavy fire from Thieu-Ky's automatic weapons. Aware of the enemy's plot, Madame Rieng and her comrades, although seriously wounded, shouted at the top of their voices:

"Down with the U.S.—Thieu—Ky clique!"
"Long live the South Viet Nam N.F.L.!"
"Long live President Ho Chi Minh!"

After having given them the finishing shot, the assasins drove the car to a mortuary and spread the rumour that the car had been attacked by revolutionary forces. But the militants' shouts had been heard by the local people in spite of the noise of gunfire. The traitors' cruelty and vileness was exposed by the population of Saigon.

Arrested in May 1967 when on an assignment, Madame Rieng heroically endured the most barbarous tortures. Although her torturers burnt her finger tips to the bones, they failed to wrest the least bit of information from her.

IT was not the first time that N.F.L. militants were cowardly assassinated by the American aggressors and their henchmen Thieu and Ky. On March 23, 1968, a service in the memory of Madame Le Thi Rieng was organized by the N.F.L. Central Committee and the South Viet Nam Liberation Women's Union. Over 200 delegates unanimously adopted a resolution addressed to the Presidium of the N.F.L. Central Committee urging that appropriate measures be taken against recalcitrant agents of the U.S.—Thieu—Ky clique now in the hands of the people's forces and that the U.S.—Thieu—Ky clique's crimes be duly punished.

Madame LE THI RIENG

BORN in 1925 into a poor peasant family in Vinh My village, Gia Rai district, Bac Lieu province.

In 1945, head of the local committee of the Women's Union of Rach Gia province.

In 1949, delegate of Rach Gia women to the Committee of the Women's Union for National Salvation in East Nam Bo of which she became Vice-President.

Married in 1953 Le Trong Tam, a militant in the resistance against the French colonialists and killed by the U.S.-Diem clique at the end of 1960.

In 1961, Vice - President of the South Viet Nam Liberation Women's Union and member of the C.C. of the South Viet Nam N.F.L.

P.L.A.F. CONTINUE TO TIGHTEN THEIR NOOSE AROUND ENEMY TOWNS AND POSITIONS

— Khe Sanh More and More Tightly Encircled.
— Three U.S. Road Convoys Destroyed in a Day in the Western High Plateaux.
— Two Urban Centres on Highway No 1 (Northwest of Saigon) Controlled by the P.L.A.F.

IN Quang Tri sector, the P.L.A.F. noose is tightened around Khe Sanh. The Liberation artillery continues to rain shells on positions of U.S. Marine Regiment 26 and puppet Rangers. On March 17, the people's forces overran a U.S. blockhouse at Ta Con and killed or wounded over 60 enemy troops venturing out of their casemates in an attempt to recuperate airdropped supplies. On March 26, one of the few enemy patrols was wiped out.

In the coastal area, the P.L.A.F. hammered at the U.S. forces north of Dong Ha and Cua Viet, chiefly on March 20 and 22, putting out of action over 120 G.I.'s.

THE enemy's attempts to relax the pressure around Hue met with a stiff resistance from the P.L.A.F. The battles fought on March 21 and 22 at the gates of the old "imperial" city inflicted 160 casualties on the Yankees. The puppet troops attacked on March 17 east of the city had 150 men put out of action. Western press agencies reported that a column of motorized vehicles of the U.S. Air Mobile Division operating in a mountain region 30km west of Hue was repelled by the P. L. A. F. with "moderate losses" (that means that at least 25 per cent of the enemy's effectives were put out of action). The Phu Bai airfield was pounded by P. L. A. F. artillery on March 26, and the C.P. of a puppet regiment at Tu Ha on March 21.

IN the **Western High Plateaux**, three U.S. convoys were violently intercepted in three localities on March 15 on the section of Highway No 19 between An Khe and Pleiku, resulting in 60 vehicles, including 21 tanks and armoured cars and about one hundred tons of freight destroyed, and 102 G.I.s killed or wounded.

Many enemy positions were shelled: Dakto (Hill 877 on March 15), Kontum region (elements of U.S. Para Brigade 173 and the training centre on March 17, and the airfield on March 25), Ban Me Thuot (military depot on March 22), etc... A fierce hand-to-hand fight which took place on March 25 made it possible for the P.L.A.F. to control for many hours running a U.S. artillery emplacement about 30 km west of Kontum. Ambushed southeast of Ban Me Thuot on March 17, a battalion of puppet Infantry Division 24 had about one hundred killed, wounded or captured.

AROUND **Saigon — Cho Lon — Gia Dinh** where from March 11 onwards the enemy has launched a "clearing" operation boasted to be of large scale and great efficiency, the P.L.A.F. have been very active. On March 13 and 14, they put out of action about one hundred patrooms of enemy puppet battalions 8 km from Gia Dinh. On March 15, 16 and 17, at some 30 km northwest of Saigon, they killed or wounded 400 enemy soldiers, destroyed or burnt 28 tanks and armoured cars in Duc Hoa district where on March 12, 200 G.I.'s and 24 vehicles had met with the same fate. Many enemy positions and bases were plastered, chiefly TanSon Nhat airbase and a sub-sector C.P. at the gates of Saigon.

At Thu Dau Mot town, a quarter reserved to U.S. officers was violently attacked on the night of March 15: 150 puppet soldiers and 150 G.I.'s killed or wounded. Meanwhile, 5 enemy bases nearby were shelled.

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Westmoreland's Dismissal in Height of Battle

WHAT was bound to happen has happened. On March 22, 1968 President Johnson announced the removal of General Westmoreland as commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Corps in South Viet Nam, something that had been expected for quite a time. By appointing Westmoreland Army Chief of Staff, Johnson wanted to make public opinion believe that this move was just a usual shift of responsibilities. However, the U.S. president's decision was made public at a time when American opinion considered Washington's strategy in Viet Nam was in a complete stalemate. It was also regarded as the first outcome of the lengthy meetings over the past three weeks in Washington to re-examine this strategy in all its bearings following the heavy setbacks sustained by the U.S. since the beginning of this year. The truth about the sacking of Westmoreland therefore cannot be concealed.

WESTMORELAND's climbing the ladder of fame was coupled with Washington's escalation of its aggressive war in South Viet Nam. He was made a four-star general in June 1964 when he replaced General Harkins at the head of the M.A.A.G. Command. Johnson earnestly hoped that as "the youngest four-star general in the history of the U.S. Army," tough and dynamic Westmoreland would, together with Maxwell Taylor, turn the tide of the "special war" then bogged down in a blind alley. Towards July 1965 it was apparent that the "special war" had been a complete fiasco in every respect. Taylor was recalled. With the massive introduction of U.S. troops into South Viet Nam, Westmoreland received full powers from Johnson for the military conduct of the war which had reached a new stage, that of the "local war." As this war gradually developed into the biggest of its type in the history of aggression of North American imperialism, Westmoreland, step by step, had in his command the largest Expeditionary Corps equipped and trained for aggression in the military history of the United States. It was the deliberate intention of the White House to surround him with an aura in the hope of striking a light into the tunnel of the Viet Nam war. In November 1967, departing from an established American tradition, Johnson authorized Westmoreland to deliver to the Congress a sanguine report on the prospects of the war in an attempt to silence the opponents of his Viet Nam policy.

Despite all his strivings, Westmoreland failed to live up the confidence that the U.S. President had placed in him. His "five-point plan" within the framework of the first "dry-season counter-offensive" in 1965-1966 when the U.S Expeditionary Corps was 200,000 strong just as his "two-prong strategy" in the second "dry-season counter - offensive" when he had 400,000 troops under his command and his "four-phase programme" in late 1967 and early 1968, when nearly 500,000 G.I.'s were present in Viet Nam, had one after another come to a flop. Since mid-1967 Johnson's only hope was that Westmoreland would to the best of his ability prevent the war from further worsening "pending new decisions." But the simultaneous offensive and uprisings of the South Vietnamese armed forces and people since the *Tet* festival, have heralded the utter failure of the "local war."

WESTMORELAND had to come under the crossfire of American opinion. This commanding general was reputed for throwing his men into the "furnace." During the three years of the "local war," some 300,000 G.I.'s were killed or wounded. The U.S. Command which as a rule substantially shortens its casualty lists meant for public consumption, has had to admit that the toll of U.S. lives has already surpassed that of the Korean war. Westmoreland also owes his reputation to his pertinacity in asking for reinforcement. Though he had already half a million men, he recently requested another 200,000 the very moment Johnson was meeting with many difficulties in the election year. Finally, the U.S. President was forced to relieve of his post "the great soldier" whom, not long ago, he had extolled to the skies and awarded the highest military medal.

By firing Westmoreland, Johnson — the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. armed forces and the principal architect of the aggressive war against Viet Nam — wanted to shift the responsibility for U.S. failures onto the commander of the Expeditionary Corps. Other generals serving in Viet Nam had been his scapegoats. After the bankruptcy of the traditional neo-colonialist policy, he gave Harkins the sack. And "special warfare" having come to grief, he discharged Taylor. Such other lower-ranking generals as De Soisoure, Seaman and Walt also lost their jobs after stinging defeats. The changing of commanding officers in the height of the battle is a thing that the losing side does against the grain. But the cause of Washington's main failure in South Viet Nam lies in the ineptitude of its strategy and

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